

The DECD*Agenda*

Connecticut Department of Economic
and Community Development

IN THIS ISSUE

Spring 2002

Mark Twain House	1
DECD Wins Award	2
Morgan Street Parking Garage	2
CT Inner City 10	3
Out and About	4
Connecticut Business Training Networks	6
Agriculture Cluster Launched	7
Tylerville Center	7
CDBG Week	8
Skrentny Block Project	8
Windsor Court	9
Collin Bennett Commons	9
Youth BizPlan Competition	10
New Export Initiative	11

Mark Twain House Breaks Ground On \$15 Million Education And Visitors Center

Hundreds were on hand to celebrate a special milestone for the Mark Twain House in Hartford as it broke ground on its new \$15 million Education and Visitors Center, a 35,000-square-foot structure that is slated to open in 2003. DECD is contributing \$4 million to the project.



Dignitaries on hand for the ceremony included Connecticut Governor John Rowland and First Lady Patty Rowland (*pictured left*), as well as U.S. Representative John Larson, Hartford Mayor Eddie A. Perez, and James R. Claffee, president of The Mark Twain House board of trustees.

The Education and Visitors Center will house two exhibition galleries, a lecture hall and program facilities, classrooms, a café, and an orientation film by the eminent documentary filmmaker Ken Burns. In addition, the building will provide secure, climate-controlled storage space for the museum's varied collections of books, manuscripts, photographs, Victorian-era and Twain-related artifacts.

The classrooms and lecture hall will allow the museum to expand its education and outreach programs, providing opportunities to learn about Twain and his legacy to broader local and national audiences. The new center will be equipped with state-of-the-art distance-learning and videoconferencing capabilities that will establish the museum as a learning laboratory and teaching resource for the nation.

Governor John G. Rowland said, "The Mark Twain House is a significant part of Connecticut's historical and cultural heritage. The new Education and Visitors Center will undoubtedly boost tourism in our state and will expose new visitors to the rich legacy and life of one of America's greatest writers."

The Mark Twain House is the restored, nineteen-room, Victorian mansion, decorated by Louis Comfort Tiffany, that was built in 1874 for the author and his family. Now an internationally acclaimed museum, its mission is to increase appreciation of Mark Twain's legacy as one of the nation's major cultural figures and to demonstrate the continuing relevance of his work, his life, and his times. For more information, visit

www.marktwainhouse.org.



DECD's Newsletter Wins National Award

The DECD Agenda received a platinum award for best newsletter in its class from the League of American Communications Professionals (LACP), an organization based in San Diego, California. Many U.S. corporations participated in



the LACP's 2001 Employee Newsletter Competition. The DECD Agenda competed in Class XVII, a

category for quarterly publications of an organization with fewer than 1,000 employees, and topped the likes

of the Weather Channel and Cinnabon. The Agenda is featured on LACP's Web site, www.lacp.com.

LACP commented, "Ultimately, the DECD Agenda presents a sense of accomplishment to readers, demonstrating to employees how their hard work is making a difference in the economic development of the state."

Editor's Note: A special thank-you to the DAS communications staff for helping DECD look good, to all our economic, housing and community development partners, and especially to all the DECD staff for giving us so many good things to write about.

DECD a Player in Developing Hartford's "Six Pillars" Morgan Street Garage Hailed as the Most Affordable Parking in Town



(l-r) Chet Camarata, Executive Director, DECD, Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez, and Brendan Fox, Executive Director, CCEDA are happy about the opening of the new Morgan Street parking garage.

The new Morgan Street Garage has opened in Hartford, signifying great progress in one of Governor Rowland's "six pillars" of development plan, an initiative to revitalize downtown Hartford.

The "six pillars" plan is overseen by the Capital City Economic Development Authority (CCEDA), a quasi-public agency established in 1998 to direct state-supported development projects in and around the City of Hartford.

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) provided \$4,000,000 for the new Morgan Street Garage, to provide safe and affordable parking in the downtown area.

Overall, Governor Rowland's \$771 million, "six pillars" plan extends well beyond parking issues, as the new Connecticut Convention Center, an adjacent Marriott Hotel, and a "super-block" of retail and entertainment venues are all on the way.

Other pillars of the Governor's plan include improvements near the Connecticut River, a downtown campus for Capital Community College, an entertainment and cultural center, a new football stadium in neighboring East Hartford, and investments in housing and employment opportunities for Hartford residents.

The new, state-of-the-art garage should immediately encourage more activity downtown where parking had been a challenge. Low monthly, daily and hourly parking rates coupled with security and services promise to encourage maximum use of its 2,290 spaces.

Adriaen's Landing, a 33-acre site for three major developments that are scheduled to open in the winter of 2004-2005, will bring up to 1,600 people to work in the area, along with lots of activity and commerce. The Morgan Street Garage, however, will serve the public's immediate needs since it's just a short walking distance from the Civic Center, Wadsworth Atheneum, the Hartford Stage, and numerous restaurants and shops.

DECD is proud to be a partner in the "six pillars" plan that is sure to enhance economic, cultural, and community life for Connecticut businesses, workers, and residents.

Inner City All-Stars

Lieutenant Governor Announces Connecticut Inner City 10 Entrepreneurship Awards

Connecticut's cities offer tremendous competitive advantages for businesses. That was one of the key messages Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell conveyed in her announcement of the winners of the 2002 Connecticut Inner City 10 Entrepreneurship Awards.



Lieutenant Governor Rell announcing the winners.

The awards program is an annual competition in which companies are nominated and ranked, producing Connecticut's "Top 10" fastest growing inner-city companies of the year. The Connecticut Inner City 10 program is a major component of Governor Rowland's Inner City Business Strategy, which promotes inner city revitalization through business development.

"Connecticut is committed to promoting its inner cities as great places to live and do business, and programs like the Inner City 10 raise awareness about the tremendous opportunities that exist here," Rell said.

The 2002 winners are as follows:

Rank	Company	City	Revenues 2000	Growth Rate Compounded
1	GRT Corporation	Stamford	\$6,601,393	131%
2	Chanler Lewis, Inc.	Waterbury	\$6,142,879	115%
3	Horizon Staffing Services	East Hartford	\$2,850,061	98%
4	Rego Realty Corporation	Hartford	\$1,463,741	76%
5	Salamander Designs, Ltd.	Hartford	\$4,975,455	67%
6	Horizon Services Corporation	East Hartford	\$2,981,481	56%
7	VA Construction Co., LLC	Waterbury	\$4,934,933	50%
8	ArchivesOne, Inc.	Waterbury	\$6,390,491	45%
9	Q-Tran, Inc.	Bridgeport	\$1,898,000	43%
10	Innovative Display & Design, Inc.	Bridgeport	\$12,760,268	40%

Out of a pool of 51 nominated businesses, 27 companies met the criteria as qualified candidates for the Connecticut Inner City 10 program. Applicants were ranked based on the percentage increase in the company's gross revenues between 1996 and 2000, and the 10 finalists with the highest five-year compounded growth rates were selected.

The winners of the Connecticut Inner City 10 were automatically nominated to compete in the ICIC/*Inc Magazine* Inner City 100 national competition, which showcases the fastest growing companies from inner cities across America. Connecticut made a tremendous showing in this year's national competition with 13 companies placing in the top 100 and three of those 13 in the top 10. Connecticut received special recognition at the April 24 awards ceremony in Boston for having more companies in the top 100 than any other state.

For more information about the Connecticut Inner City 10, visit www.DECD.org or call Ginne-Rae LeGree at 860-270-8004.



Back Row (l-r): H.E. Yusuf A. Nzibo, Republic of Kenya; Dr. Amii Omara-Otunnu, University of CT; Mr. Melvin Foote, CFA; Mr. Al Cooper, ANC/UConn Partnership Committee; Mr. James Abromaitis, DECD; Prof. Derrick Swartz, South Africa; Mr. Timothy Coppage, DECD; Mr. Jacques Walker, CFA; Front Row (l-r): Mr. David J. Saunders, CFA; Mr. Seth Evans Addo, Ghana; Dr. Mvuyo E. Tom, South Africa; H.E. Mustafa S. Nyanganyi, Tanzania; Mr. Mcebisi G. Jonas, South Africa; Mr. James Nicholas, DECD and CWTA.

AFRICA: Connecticut's Newest Emerging Business Opportunity

The Department of Economic and Community Development, as a part of its Africa Trade Initiative, joined the Constituency for Africa in hosting "Integrating Africa into the Global Economy," a forum held on February 22, 2002 at the State Capitol. The day-long event brought together Connecticut entrepreneurs and African political and business leaders to engage in frank discussions on business, social, and political issues concerning Africa and U.S.-Africa trade.

The event was attended by a number of international dignitaries, including Dr. Mvuyo E. Tom, Director General, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa; Al Cooper, retired VP, Johnson and Johnson and former Chairman of the South Africa Business Council; and various ambassadors and other key officials from Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa.

Building Ties with the British Guild

The Connecticut Office of Tourism hosted members of the British Guild of Travel Writers (the Guild) during their recent visit to New England. For the first time in its history, the Guild, a prestigious group of British media professionals such as travel writers, journalists, and broadcasters, held its annual convention in a locale outside of the United Kingdom, choosing the Fairmont Copley in Boston as its base of operations.

Along with representatives from the other five New England states, Connecticut Office of Tourism Executive Director Ed Dombroskas and Tourism Sales Program Manager Joyce Fredericks delivered a variety of marketing presentations to the group, promoting Connecticut's many cultural and historic attractions.

As part of the five-day long roster of festivities, Guild members were able to participate in a special tour of some of Connecticut's major destinations such as the Monte Cristo Cottage in New London (boyhood home of Eugene O'Neill), Mystic Seaport, New Haven's Yale University, and the Mark Twain House in Hartford.

Guild members returned home with memories of personal, hands-on experiences in the Northeast, and we hope that they'll tell all the kingdom that Connecticut is worth a visit.



(l-r) Sally Varlow, British Guild; Sandy Yamarek, Greater Hartford Tourism District; John Harrison, British Guild; Chris Bernhard, Mark Twain House; and Joyce Fredericks, DECD, enjoying a tour of the Mark Twain House, Hartford.



On the Airwaves

Listen for familiar DECD voices on radio stations throughout Connecticut. This new initiative is intended to inform even more residents about what DECD does and how we can help. Once a month, tune in to WDRC to hear Deputy Commissioner Rita Zangari or Deputy Commis-

sioner Tim Copping on the Brad Davis Show. DECD staff may also be heard on "Talk of the Town," a show hosted by Ed Flynn on WATR, Waterbury. Many DECD personnel have been talk show guests on other radio stations. Liz Appel and Andrea Scott, for example, both appeared on WYBC, New Haven, to discuss Connecticut's Inner City Business Strategy and successful projects in New Haven and Waterbury.

The American Silver Museum Finds A Home In Wallingford

Thanks to a \$500,000 grant from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), the Wallingford Historic Preservation Trust (Trust) has begun restoring the Johnson Mansion, future home of the American Silver Museum.

In 1998, Joseph Ortense Jr. donated the Main Street mansion to the Trust. That donation, along with funds from private investors and DECD, provided the impetus for the Trust to hire a local contractor, Robison, Inc., to begin the renovation work. Wallingford's leadership in the silver industry dates back to colonial times and is the driving force behind the Trust's efforts to open the museum.

At a ceremony in downtown Wallingford, DECD Development Manager Liz Appel, members of the Trust, and project supporters spoke of the intent to continue raising funds needed to complete the project.



(l-r) front row: Liz Appel, Development Manager, DECD; Mary Fritz, State Rep. (2nd row) Gene Sengstock, Chairman, Wallingford Historic Preservation Trust; James Abrams, State Rep.; and Brian McDermott, State Senator unveil American Silver Museum drawings at a press conference in Wallingford.

The State of Business Travel in Connecticut

The Business Travel Association of Southern New England recently invited Ed Dombroskas, Executive Director of DECD's Office of Tourism, to take part in a panel discussion on the future of corporate travel in Connecticut. Ed provided valuable insight on the overall health of the travel industry in the wake of Sept. 11. Specifically, he noted that while leisure travel has either met or exceeded pre-Sept. 11 levels, business travel continues to struggle. Other panelists taking part in the discussion included representatives from the hotel, airline, and travel industries.

Pilot Advanced Manufacturing Technology Program Up and Running

An outgrowth of Waterbury's Cluster Initiative, W.F. Kaynor Technical High School's Advanced Manufacturing Technology Program is now open for business on the campus of the Naugatuck Valley Community College. DECD was one of the program's partners, providing funds for equipment purchase and repair. DECD Development Manager Andrea Scott represented the department at the grand opening ceremony.

Lt. Governor Rell Launches 10th Connecticut Business Training Network Information Technology Network Will Focus on Windham-Area Businesses

In front of a packed house at Greywolf Technologies, Inc. in Willimantic, Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell recently announced the creation of a new Connecticut Business Training Network (CBTN), focusing on information technology training needs in eastern Connecticut. She highlighted the importance of the IT profession to Connecticut's economy and the competitive advantages this particular cluster initiative program brings to state businesses.

"Job training and strategic planning are essential to keeping Connecticut businesses ahead of the competition. And the business training network program is just one example of how we are successfully helping Connecticut businesses address their workforce development needs," said Lt. Governor Rell.

Connecticut's economic competitiveness strategy, the industry cluster initiative, is based upon bringing

"...the business training network program is just one example of how we are successfully helping Connecticut businesses address their workforce development needs."

private industry together to work directly with government to overcome barriers to growth; the CBTN program is also private-sector-driven, providing support to the network companies so that they may identify employee training needs and develop cost-effective solutions for improving worker skills.

The Information Technology Professionals and Users Network consists of the following Willimantic companies: Greywolf Technologies, Inc.; Windham Community Memorial Hospital; Savings Institute; Sumner and Sumner; Hawk Integrated Plastics; and United Abrasives. The Windham Region Chamber of Commerce will serve as the organizational center for the network.



Lieutenant Governor Jodi Rell (l) and DECD Deputy Commissioner Rita Zangari (c) listen as Kevin Donabue, President of Greywolf Technologies, Inc. (r) speaks at the press conference announcing the Information Technology Professionals and Users Network.

In its two and a half years in operation, the CBTN program has helped 77 businesses employing over 11,000 workers. The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development provides funding for different phases of network development. The Connecticut Business and Industry Association administers the program on behalf of the department.

A December survey of CBTN companies from the previously launched nine networks revealed that the most valuable activities of the program were conducting the analysis of training needs, designing and developing customized training programs, and profiling jobs to develop skill standards. Companies found "better prepared employees to support innovation and potential business growth."

For more information, visit www.cbia.com or www.decd.org.

Connecticut Grown

State Launches Agriculture Cluster

The annual "Ag Day" festivities at the State Capitol took on new meaning this year as Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell announced the formation of the state's eighth cluster, Connecticut's Agricultural Businesses Cluster (CAB).

The agriculture industry is made up of producers of dairy products, eggs, mushrooms, fruits and vegetables, tobacco, wine and forestry products, and also includes aquaculture, nurseries, green-houses, and florists.

"The state is dedicated to supporting its key industries," said Lt. Governor Rell. "By recognizing the significant impact that agriculture has on Connecticut's economy, and by nurturing the industry's growth, we are helping to ensure that it will continue to develop and remain competitive."

According to industry sources, the state's agriculture industry currently consists of 4,000 farms, 400,000 acres of working landscape, and 68,000 acres in Long Island Sound leased to shell fishermen. The industry as a whole employs nearly 50,000 workers, produces more than \$1 billion in annual sales, and has an annual impact on the state's economy of an additional \$1 billion. Seventy-four percent of its products are exported out of the state each year.

Funding for the CAB cluster this year will total \$200,000: half coming from the Department of Economic and Community Development and the other half from the members of the cluster.

"Connecticut's agriculture industry is at a crossroads," said John Lyman, President of CAB. "We will now focus on enhancing the awareness and image of the industry, promoting Connecticut-grown products and developing a system to manage agricultural byproducts. We will also concentrate on workforce training needs to support the growth of our industry, zoning and environmental regulations, and encroaching urbanization."

To learn more about the state's industry cluster initiative, visit www.DECD.org.



(l-r) John Lyman, President of CAB; Carmen Molina-Rios, DECD's Industry Cluster Specialist; and Shirley Ferris, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture on hand for Lt. Governor Rell's press conference.

Tylerville's Development Boom

Where is Tylerville Center? Once this DECD-assisted economic development project is completed, no one will have to ask that question.

With a \$350,000 Small Cities grant in hand, on April 1, officials from the Town of Haddam set about to renovate two vacant buildings donated by the Department of Transportation into usable, productive space. Located right near the intersection of Routes 154 and 82, the centrally located, 2.5 acre site will be home to two enterprises: The Haddam Harrington Boat Works Company and an eco-tourism center.

The Haddam Harrington Boat Works Company owners have committed \$117,000 to get the space ready for their wooden boat building and restoration business. Here, visitors will enjoy a unique look at the centuries-old craft. Right next door, at the new eco-tourism center, visitors will participate in educational programs and view exhibits pertaining to the ecology and to the Connecticut River.

In addition to the land and buildings, the Town of Haddam contributed \$66,700 to the project. And the U.S. Department of Agriculture has demonstrated its support with a \$66,300 grant. For more information, please call Suzanne Mazzotta, DECD Development Manager, at (860) 344-2530.



(l-r) Tim Coppage, Deputy Commissioner DECD; Fred Harrington, owner, Harrington Boat Works; Ann Faust, Town of Haddam; Suzanne Mazzotta, Development Manager, DECD; Mary Grasso, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and Tony Bondi, First Selectman, Town of Haddam, at ceremony in Tylerville Center.

HOUSING and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



CDBG in Connecticut: 20 Years and Still Going Strong

During national CDBG Week, from April 1- 7, Connecticut celebrated the 20th anniversary of its relationship with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. For two decades, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has been a partner with Connecticut in distributing CDBG funds to benefit low- and moderate-income residents statewide. Over 100 communities received funds for housing rehabilitation, business assistance, day care services for children and the elderly, job training, senior centers, and much more.

In a ceremony at the State Armory in Hartford on April 4, the Connecticut Community Development Association and the City of Hartford hosted an event, titled *CCDA Peer Awards of Excellence*, to honor persons, communities, and projects that represent the best of what CDBG funds can do.

DECD's Veronica Hunter, President of CCDA, presided over the event that included awards to "Legislators of the Year" Rep. Kevin DelGobbo, Naugatuck, and Rep. Walter Pawelkiewicz, Windham/Willimantic. Both recognized DECD for the active role it plays in helping to build communities.

"The CDBG Program has given Connecticut cities and towns the tools to respond to neighborhood needs and the problems of low- and moderate-income residents," said Governor Rowland in a proclamation delivered and read by Larry Lusardi, DECD Executive Director of Customer and Program Services.

Among the many deserving recipients was the Gilbert Avenue Mutual Housing project of New Haven. DECD participated in this project that renovated three blighted buildings on Gilbert Avenue and created 10 units of affordable housing along with play space for neighborhood children.



(l-r first row): CCDA Board of Directors Elaine Schmidt, Peggy Brennan, Charlotte Schroeder, and Veronica Hunter. (2nd row): Ralph Ronalds, Sarah Pour, Elizabeth Smith, Alanna Kabel, and Judy Walter. (3rd row): Tim Beeble, Peter Blomstrom, Kathy Kubn, and Jim Hallisey.

Skrentny Block Revitalization Run down block takes a turn for the better

When New Britain Mayor Lucian Pawlak was growing up a few blocks away, the Skrentny neighborhood was appreciably more attractive. Abandoned, dilapidated buildings did not mar the landscape.

The city is now taking aggressive steps to reverse the negative trend. On March 26, DECD Deputy Commissioner Tim Coppage joined state and local elected officials and other private and public supporters on Skrentny Block for a groundbreaking ceremony.

Neighborhood Housing Services of New Britain, Inc. is overseeing the project that will eventually create five units of affordable rental housing and two street-level storefronts at 157 Broad Street, as well as eight units of elderly housing and two storefronts at 161 and 163 Broad Street. One building has already been demolished to create off-street parking for future residents.

This Skrentny Block project is just a part of a comprehensive plan for the city's Broad Street Neighborhood Revitalization Zone. The plan involves building demolition, substantial renovation, and a facade improvement program—all designed to improve the quality of life for both residents and businesses.



(l-r) Christine Traczyk, Executive Director, NHS of New Britain; Lucian Pawlak, Mayor of New Britain; Joanne Sullivan, Director, Fed HomeLoan Bank; Cal Vinal, V.P., Webster Bank; and Tim Coppage, Deputy Commissioner, DECD breaking ground on Skrentny Block.

Bigger, Brighter, and Better Apartments for the Elderly

Fresh, new approach to housing rehabilitation

"This project represents a new direction for the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and demonstrates our continued commitment to improving the quality of life for our seniors," said Deputy Commissioner Tim Coppage at the dedication ceremony for the Windsor Court Elderly Apartment Community in Enfield.

State representatives, town officials, and members of the Housing Authority of the Town of Enfield were present on March 13 to unveil 40 spacious, newly renovated units in the Windsor Court Elderly Apartment Community.

DECD provided a \$2,646,600 Rental Rehabilitation Program grant to the Enfield Housing Authority to complete this substantial rehabilitation project and reduce the total number of units from 80 to 40. This state-funded prototype retrofit project—i.e. reducing the number of units to create larger living spaces for the elderly—is the first of its kind in Connecticut.

The larger size of the apartments is expected to increase the demand for the units among the town's elderly population. "Windsor Court's vacancy rate has been increasing steadily in recent years," said Mary Ellen Kuraska, former Executive Director of Enfield's Housing Authority. "With help from former State Representative Fred Gelsi and DECD, we've been able



(l-r) John Kissel, State Senator; Tadeus Buczkowski, Housing Authority; Kathleen Tallarita, State Rep.; Timothy Coppage, DECD; Ron Campbell, DECD; William Ballard, Housing Authority Board; Mary Ellen Kuraska, former Housing Authority Exec. Director; Gerald Crowley, Housing Authority Board; and Scott Bertrand, Exec. Director, Housing Authority.

to fulfill our dream of creating apartments that meet the real needs of today's elderly citizens."

The approximately 700 square foot apartments are one-story, adaptable units with entryways wide enough for wheelchairs and can readily be converted into handicapped units. Four apartments are completely handicapped accessible. State funds were used to perform substantial rehabilitation such as increasing closet and cabinet space and improving energy efficiency by replacing heating systems, doors, and windows.



DECD's Karen Santana (back row, right) and ONE/CHANE's Larry Charles Sr. (2nd from right) at grand opening ceremony with Mrs. Molly Bennett (back row, left) and family.

Collin Bennett's Dream Realized in Hartford's North End

Giving residents a stake in their homes and neighborhood

Much of the City of Hartford was represented on March 27 at the dedication ceremony for this housing development named after the late Reverend Collin Bennett. In the city, and particularly in the North End, Collin Bennett's name needs no introduction, as he worked tirelessly to better

cont. on page 12

Developing Tomorrow's Business Leaders

If March 27 was any indication, the future looks bright for Connecticut's cities. That's the day 23 students from 12 inner city schools took part in the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship's (NFTE) second Youth BizPlan Competition at the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury.

NFTE is a non-profit organization committed to teaching at-risk inner-city youth the principles of entrepreneurship. NFTE CT, in partnership with the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and Department of Education, administers the *Youth Entrepreneurship Program*, a component of Governor Rowland's Connecticut Inner City Business Strategy that promotes economic revitalization through business development and job creation.

In this program, students learn the basics of starting a business. NFTE CT's curriculum includes classroom and online instruction; interactive, business-oriented field trips; classroom speakers; and other components. Students develop new mathematical skills by working out return on investment and by selecting and following stocks. They hone reading skills by reading the *Wall Street Journal*, and improve written and oral communication skills while preparing a business plan, composing letters, and making formal presentations.

The highlight of this program is the *Youth BizPlan Competition*, where students outline their vision of bringing a product or service to market. They do so by delivering a PowerPoint presentation of their business plans to a distinguished panel of judges comprising business, political, and educational leaders. To be eligible to participate in this statewide competition, students must first place in the top two of their individual high school competitions.

Rasha Ayoub, a student from Westhill High School in Stamford took first place in the competition,



(l-r) First-place winner, Rasha Ayoub, Westhill High School, Stamford; Cathy Manning, NFTE teacher, Westhill High School; Elaine Thomas Williams, NFTE CT; and Margaret Dunn, NFTE New England.

winning the \$1,000 grand prize for her retail meat-selling business named Al Mezze. Partners Quinton Spicer and Emile Eugene from Hartford Adult Education Center came in second for E & Q Fishery, a wholesale to retail fish farm, winning \$750. And in a tie for third, Mike Davis from New Britain High School placed for his business called The Hot Spot, a Jamaican food cart, and Lucien

Francilette from Waterbury's Crosby High School won for a candy vending machine business called Your Needs, both winning \$500.

Honorable mentions and prizes of \$200 went to Terrance Hargrove, New Britain High School; Sharece Sellem, Hartford Adult Education Center; and Fritz Chery, French Speaking Baptist Church, Stamford. Students that did not rank in the top three categories were each awarded \$100 consolation prizes for participating in the competition.

Since NFTE CT was launched in February of 2000, more than 1,000 inner-city high school students have participated in the program and 54 teachers have become Certified Entrepreneurship Trainers (CET).

"Connecticut has one of the best youth programs in the country," said Steve Mariotti, president and founder of NFTE. "It's great to see state government supporting the effort so wholeheartedly and recognizing its critical role in shaping the future business leaders of the inner city."

Visit www.DECD.org to learn more about the Inner City Business Strategy and the Youth Entrepreneurship Program.

New Help For Export-Ready Companies

Connecticut program is first of its kind in the nation

It's time to add another item to Connecticut's list of "firsts." That's because the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) has formed a unique partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce (USDOC), through its Connecticut Export Assistance Center, to make it easier for Connecticut's small and medium-sized firms to export their products worldwide.

This innovative program will help qualified Connecticut businesses with export-ready products to compete successfully in the global marketplace. Connecticut suppliers will receive personalized assistance to link their U.S.-made products and services with foreign importers/buyers, including agents, distributors, and users.

"The state of Connecticut is committed to help companies grow by providing the financial and technical assistance they need to expand in international markets," Lieutenant Governor Rell said at a signing ceremony celebrating the new export partnership.

DECD, working with the USDOC, will assist eligible companies to obtain cost-effective access to a wide variety of USDOC services such as BuyUSA.com, Gold Key Services, Commercial News USA, International Partners Search, Flexible Market Research, and the Matchmaker Program. Companies will also have access to the USDOC's extensive network of commercial staff in U.S. Embassies and Consulates in 90 countries, for a total of approximately 160 locations overseas.

"This formal agreement between the State of Connecticut and the U.S. Department of Commerce is a definite 'first' and is the result of the many years of excellent working relations between the DECD, USDOC's Middletown Export Assistance Center, and



(l-r) Deputy Assistant Secretary Bruce Blakeman, USDOC; Lt. Governor M. Jodi Rell; and Commissioner James Abromaitis, DECD at a signing ceremony at the Capitol, Hartford.

the CT District Export Council," commented Bruce W. Blakeman, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Domestic Operations, USDOC, Washington, DC.

A healthy export sector is essential to a state's economic growth. Data show that Connecticut exports from 1995-2000 averaged 5.5 percent of the gross state product, and totaled \$8.7 billion in 2000. And, 95 percent of companies that export goods are small to medium-sized firms, with fewer than 500 employees.

Application forms are available on DECD's Web site, www.decd.org.

For more information about the export assistance program, please contact DECD's Hartford office at (860) 270-8068 or the USDOC's Export Assistance Center in Middletown at (860) 638-6590.

Collin Bennett, cont. from page 9

his community, while championing homeownership as a means for the poor to escape poverty.

His widow, Mrs. Molly Bennett, told the audience that her husband would have been proud to see the two vacant, dilapidated buildings at the corner of Cleveland Avenue and Barbour Street transformed into 11 attractive units of limited equity cooperative housing for low- to moderate-income families.

Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell thanked the many people and organizations that made this project a reality, including the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) for providing financial assistance totaling \$1,313,900. DECD awarded the non-profit corporation ONE/CHANE \$274,900 in federal HOME program funds along with a \$198,720 loan and \$840,280 grant from the state's Limited Equity Cooperative Program.

Limited equity cooperative housing gives residents a stake in the development and on-going management of the properties. Collin Bennett Commons residents are required to attend a 40-hour training course to learn the legal and management responsibilities of cooperative living. They also contribute 300 hours of "sweat equity" to renovate the housing units.

Having now rid the neighborhood of a haven for drug dealers and users, residents have great expectations for the area's future. "Keep it clean," Mrs. Bennett said, as she exhorted her new neighbors, "I am watching."



DECD

State of Connecticut
Department of Economic and
Community Development

**505 HUDSON STREET
HARTFORD, CT 06106
WWW.DECD.ORG**

THE DECD AGENDA IS
PUBLISHED BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

JOHN G. ROWLAND
GOVERNOR

JAMES ABROMAITIS
COMMISSIONER

JAMES W. WATSON
EDITOR

CHRISTINE JACKSON
STAFF WRITER

LAYOUT AND DESIGN
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

PRESORT STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #4313
HARTFORD, CT